

Stop the Church Fires

Jerome Johnson

A reader asked me to write about the church fires this month.

Although I've been observing the wave of fires at churches, especially black churches, I haven't written about them before because, quite frankly, it hurt too much. This is something I have felt directly as a black person, a focused attack on my people and my community. The hurt is profound, because ever since we were brought to this hemisphere our churches have been the foundation of the black community, and to burn a church is to burn the core of our community.

Our churches have always been more than houses of prayer and worship. They are also sanctuaries, meeting halls, clinics, youth centers, schools. When we were slaves, churches were stations on the Underground Railroad, and they were the linchpin of our society during Jim

Crow. Many of our leaders of the '60s and '70s were ministers and lay leaders. More recently, our churches have been vital in our efforts to preserve our young people.

-Violent racists know this, and that is why they target our churches. Yet, as always, our community is responding not with hate, but with a message

sure how to spin this. Despite the statistics, they hesitate to call it terrorism (even though it is). They keep saying that it's an epidemic, not a conspiracy. I don't know if it's a conspiracy, copycats, or a mixture of the two. I do appreciate the fact that this is now a Federal case, supervised by Assistant Attorney General for Civil

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of peace and reconciliation. Some wonder about this, but for us it's simple: two wrongs don't make a right.

Law enforcement officials aren't

Rights, Deval Patrick. Moreover, I call on all law enforcement officials -- yes, including Thurston County's -- to be especially watchful. The fires must stop, and the terrorists who set them

will hesitate when they see the people and police on guard.

A church is more than the building with the address. It is people, a community in itself. The building may be burned, but the church survives, rebuilds, grows.

In Ann Arbor, counter-demonstrators rioted at a Klan rally and police used tear gas to break it up. A black woman, Keshia Thomas, used her body and shielded one of the Klansmen from a rain of bricks, rocks and bottles.

In Portland, an angry Mayor Katz has vowed that hatred and violence will not be tolerated.

In Seattle, members of Christian and Jewish communities have begun working to coordinate the defense of everyone's churches. They know that as long as any of us are at risk, none of us are safe.

And in Olympia, a broad coalition of activists works to organize a July rally. Representatives of local churches, law enforcement, lay people, and civil rights groups will all affirm a simple message: Stop the fires.

If you burn a church -- or anything else -- in Thurston County, we will hold you accountable. ♦

CUT THE CRAP

Spin Solvent for the Politically Challenged

A Plea For Americans to "Waste Their Vote" in '96

Greg Hohnholt

So here we are at the end of the second millenium A.D. with Tweedle-Dole or Tweedle-Dupe to choose from for president in the Probable Contenders category. With Whitewater on the wane, Newt is gearing up for an all-out assault on Clinton, while Dole talks about pumping more billions into a Star Wars missile defense system in California. Meanwhile, Joe and Jane American Voter either grit their teeth and bitch in anguish on talk radio, or yawn and change the channel on the remote.

Republicans are, for the most part, going to vote for Dole to beat Clinton. Democrats and progressives are, however, divided into two camps about Clinton. First, there is the "lesser of two evils" scenario, exemplified by Mr. Bernard Mesco in the following letter to the June issue of *The Progressive*: "As a liberal Democrat, I agree with many of the comments and some of the anti-Clinton rhetoric, but it upsets me when people lose their ability to reason and decide that they're not going to vote for Clinton in the next election. ...Wasn't it Churchill

who said that he would make a pact with the devil to save England when he signed the pact with Stalin? We must realize that a 'no' vote for Clinton is a vote for Dole. I would love to vote for Ralph Nader here in California, but I see that as a wasted vote."

Mr. Mesco concludes, "My fellow liberals, do not bury your heads in the

The Perot Revolution was only the beginning

Democracy is moribund in this country because of a lack of electoral choice. Our two party system makes it nearly impossible for non-Republicans or non-Democrats to get elected because of the incredible amount of money it takes to mount a credible

Wake up and smell the coffee, voters; a vote for Clinton (or against Dole, really) is a vote for continued government collusion with corporate America.

sand. I'm appealing to you to do the right thing and vote for Clinton. The alternative is not acceptable."

Well, folks, my response is that voting for Clinton is the equivalent of burying any hope for a truly inclusive and participatory democracy in the sand. Cut the crap, Mr. Mesco; the Clinton 'devil' is just as unacceptable as Dole, and it is you who have lost your "ability to reason". Here's why.

campaign. But as long as voters keep thinking that a vote for a third party candidate is a "wasted vote," the two party system and the special interest money that runs it will maintain its stranglehold on the American electorate.

Ross Perot proved that a third party vote is NOT wasted. When Perot got 19% of the vote in '92, Democrats and Republicans were falling all over

themselves trying to figure out how to woo those crucial swing voters in '94 and '96. If, for example, Ralph Nader got 15% of the vote (not as unlikely as the media would have you think), government regulation of Wall St. and multinational corporations would, at the very least, be much higher up on the beltway agenda.

Some would argue that corporate influence and big money squashed the progressive, anti-NAFTA portion of the Perot vote anyway, so why would a Nader scenario be any different? Folks, the Big Two may have distracted the public momentarily, but this issue is not going away.

A Progressive reform platform can win

First off, you have to consider that an unprecedented right wing propaganda campaign on talk radio helped turn attention away from campaign reform and stagnant wages to Bill Clinton himself, "demon" President and "socialized medicine" advocate. Despite the initial success Republicans and conservatives enjoyed with this strategy, Pat Buchanan's '96 New Hampshire primary campaign and

(Continued on page 9)

LETTERS

A Word In Honor of Charity

The other day in my meditations, I came across a quote from St. Paul: "Charity is slow to anger, is kind; charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely; is not puffed up. It is not ambitious, it seeketh not its own, proveketh not opposition, plans no evil." After contemplating the words of this great saint, thoughts of a conversation broke my sweet repose. A well intentioned friend condemning charity claimed I was too poor to be a philanthropist!

Was St. Paul only speaking to the rich philanthropist Corinthians when he spoke of charity? Certainly he was speaking to all who had ears to hear and since that day people rich and poor have responded lovingly to his call for charity.

Today, with so many institutions out there to take care of charity, many among us have forgotten the meaning behind St. Paul's words. "Charitable contributions" have become a commodity to be divvied up by large national organizations working within our own community. Do we really believe we can change our world when we do nothing within our own community?

And how do we respond to those few who work among the poor and destitute who are outside the scope of these institutions? We ignore their existence while they do the "dirty work" for us. Kudos to groups like "Food Not Bombs" and all the volunteers at "Bread And Roses" who saw the need and allowed love to lead them. These nameless, selfless volunteers are today's saints. And an extra special thanks to "Long-Hair" Dave for his years of work on the Needle Exchange/Olympia AIDS Prevention Projects.

We will never know how many lives "Long-Hair" Dave saved because of his love for humanity. People in our community forced a shutdown of his program at Bread And Roses. Have these people become so removed from reality that they have forgotten an important time when loving support from a peer influenced change in their lives? Are they so inhumane as to condemn a human to risk of AIDS?

It was real, Dave, as real as anything we face today. Who knows, you may have helped one of their relations from contamination. You have saved many of our sons and daughters from a fate we don't want to admit is possible. AIDS KILLS ANYONE — IT CAN STRIKE ANYTIME! Thanks again Dave for taking on this task as long as you did. The world is a better place because of you.

So I close this reflection of our community's humble workers and remind us all that charity is not a derogatory statement but a show of love for all humanity. Remember the words of St. Paul: "Rejoice not injustice, but delight in the truth, bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, endure all things." With love all barriers may be broken.

All my relations, More Rain

The Israeli Labor Party A Socialist Dove?

To the editor,

It appears, to me at least, that Don Busky, the State Chairperson for the Socialist Party of Pennsylvania, did not carefully read the Middle East texts in the May WIP before he criticized them. Perhaps they can be faulted, due to brevity, for sketchiness and (even) omission of some key facts. But to call them one-sided and unfair to Israel, as Mr. Busky does in his June letter to the editor, is pure distortion.

I will leave it to others more able to refute Mr. Busky in detail. Instead, I want to focus on two assertions that he made concerning Israel's Labor Party.

According to Mr. Busky, the Israeli Labor Party wants to make peace with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). And, besides that, the Labor Party is *socialist*. Consider the following quote:

The Israeli Labor Party has proven that they are willing to make peace with the PLO...If the PLO makes peace, the Israeli socialists [sic] will make peace too.

That the Labor Party wants to make peace with the PLO should come as no surprise. All political power formations want to make peace with their enemies. For that matter, the Likud Party wants peace with the PLO. Hell, even the Bush administration wanted a peaceful resolution with Iraq prior to the Gulf War. The important things to look for in peace proposals are the terms that are demanded. We will briefly look at Labor's Party's proposal for peace below. But before that, let's address Mr. Busky's second claim: the Labor Party of Israel is socialist.

I was under the impression that the Labor Party was pro-business, with some elements that can be considered as *social democratic* (not *socialist*) — especially for Israel's Jewish citizens. But never has evidence been presented that convinces me that the Labor Party advocates democratic control in the workplace, in commerce, in banking, in foreign policy decisions, etc. On the other hand, perhaps my sources are wrong, and indeed the Israeli Labor Party is committed to socialism. To clear the matter up WIP should solicit an article from Mr. Busky, where he can argue his case with supporting evidence. How about it?

Without a doubt, there are Israeli socialists. And a few of them may support, quite likely for pragmatic reasons, the Labor Party's "Allon Plan" for peace with the Palestinians. This plan, as a certain native Pennsylvanian named Noam Chomsky explains — in books, articles, interviews, and talks — calls for Israel to take what it wants (land, resources) in the occupied territories, and leave the rest for the Palestinians. Some peace plan. In fact, it is in gross violation of international law.

Then there is the framework for peace called "The International Consensus for Peace in the Middle East". The "International" refers to the fact that — with the exception of Israel and the US, and one or two others —

every country in the world supports the framework. And I'll bet that the majority of Israel's socialists support it too. The final two paragraphs of the Jewish Committee on the Middle East's statement on Israel's then recent shelling of Lebanon, found in the May WIP, expresses the essence of the International Consensus. But basically, it calls for Israel's withdrawal from all territory seized through military action, in exchange for a negotiated peace settlement with the neighboring Arab states. For the Palestinians, it means the right to an independent homeland in East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza.

Although the International Consensus has overwhelming support, there are people, Israeli socialist perhaps among them, who find the proposal for a two-state settlement between Israel and the Palestinians to be inviable. This is particularly relevant in the wake of the deal that the PLO struck with Israel in September, 1993, which cedes to Israel more than the Allon plan proposed. In place of two separate countries — one rich, one poor — these people feel that a lasting peace with justice can only occur within a system based on a binational federation between Israel, the Palestinians, and perhaps other

neighboring Arab nations.

A binational federation between Israelis, (Palestinian Jews) and Arabs is an old idea from the British mandate days. Among its supporters was Albert Einstein, a socialist of some repute. And perhaps it is an idea whose time has come.

Yours in the Struggle for Peace and Justice,

Greg Bye, SEIU member

My Day June 4th, 1996

was spent in the sun
trees giving me away
all alive in a meadow
of stumps

Did I find you breathing
in the shape of a deer
made of wood

Your belly large with life
face forlorn eyes held
outright slyly staring
at what had been
birthed not on the earth
but of the air
inside us all

Sonya Bedillion

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Mission Statement: "Our aim is to confront injustice and encourage a participatory democracy based on economic, social, and environmental justice. Works In Progress is dedicated to providing a voice for those most affected by the exclusionary and unfair practices that seek to silence the oppressed."

Anti-Discrimination Clause: We will collectively endeavor to be sensitive and respectful to all those oppressed in this society, and their issues. However, if and when we should make a mistake in this regard, we expect to acknowledge it and to express regret for injury or insult given.

The following statement will become part of the Editorial Policy and will be the governing tool for the Anti-Discrimination Clause: *WIP will make every effort to work with the contributor of material considered by WIP to be offensive in order to reach a mutually agreed upon resolution, but WIP reserves the right as a last resort to edit or not print submitted material.*

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Works In Progress is a community newspaper sponsored by the Thurston County Rainbow Coalition. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Rainbow Coalition or the Workers In Progress and are solely those of the authors.

Correspondence/articles are always welcome. Articles on disk (text preferred). WIP reserves the right to publish in whole or part all submissions. For editing purposes, please enclose your phone number. Send submissions to Works In Progress, PO Box 295, Olympia, WA 98507.

WIP Schedule

Submission deadline:

Friday, July 19

On that day, there will be a meeting at SPEECH
(218 Fourth Ave) at 6 pm.
Call 705-2726 for info.

Proofreading Meeting

Tuesday, July 23 at 7 pm
Oly Timberland Library

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UPDATES & BRIEFS

Bread & Roses Receives Hate Mail

After B&R's spring newsletter mailing asking for support, they were greeted by this anonymous statement:

In my wildest dreams I can not imagine anyone donating to that collection of two legged animals that stalks the neighborhood around Bread & Roses. Wonder what their parents think? And maybe they can't either! Wasted life. Think they would be more at home at animal control.

Volunteer Shelter Parents Needed

Homelessness increases every year in our country, and within this group there is an especially alarming rate of homeless and runaway youth. Community Youth Services and the Shelter Project of Thurston County are looking for dedicated volunteers to become shelter families for young people. While providing temporary help to these youth, ages 11-17, our program provides professional support from the Shelter Project staff. To find out more about this opportunity to make a difference call Susan Moore at 943-0781 x623.

Community Sustaining Fund Spring Grants

Olympia Car Share Committee: \$225 for printing, publicity and stipend to promote a possible car co-op in the Olympia area.

LaLeche League of Thurston County: \$375 to cover accommodation cost for five local members to attend a leadership conference. The LaLeche League promotes the benefits of breast feeding.

Todd Denny: \$300 to fund a pilot summer native youth project. This project will offer reservation youths an opportunity to explore the larger community.

Joanne Lee: \$625 to help initiate a Bio-regional Economic Network that would include a local currency.

CopWatch: \$350 to purchase a used camcorder to document local police conduct/misconduct.

Volunteers of the Sister Holly Community Garden Project: \$300 for material cost for a senior citizen/at-risk youth community garden project.

Media Island International: \$300 to fund printing cost for a new "Interlink" directory of local activist organizations.

Young Voices: \$200 in scholarships for low-income youth to attend creative writing workshops.

Lynn Taylor: \$200 for two scholarships for low-income youth to attend the art and environment oriented Dancing Hearts Summer Camp.

With the completion of the Spring

Grant Cycle, the Community Sustaining Fund is pleased to announce that \$32,422 have been awarded to local groups and individuals since the organization's founding in 1987. Twice a year the Community Sustaining Fund awards money to local groups and individuals engaged in social justice, environmental protection and community building projects. The Community Sustaining Fund tends to award funds for startup cost of projects that might otherwise go unfunded, but with the expectation that these projects will become self sustaining. Grant funds are derived from contributing individuals and businesses. Some of the funds for the Spring Grant Cycle came from an annual raffle that was supported by a dozen local businesses.

For more information contact the Community Sustaining Fund at PO Box 10115 Olympia, WA 98502.

Did you miss the Torchlight Parade?

This is an invitation to be one of the 50 volunteers at the first ever South Sound Senior Games, August 10th, at North Thurston High School. Volunteers will be "in the know" and get in free. Whatever your age, you can work as aides at each event and at the registration table, as ushers, and as assistants at set-up and take-down. There will be a 1+1/2 hour training on August 1st.

The Games will occur from 10am to 2pm on a Saturday, and feature track and field events, swimming, and "lite games" (bowling on the lawn, croquet, etc.) There will be awards for first, second, and third place. As active seniors know, physical activity is critically important for retaining or regaining good health as you age. South Sound Senior Games producers have organized the game to provide seniors with a festival to celebrate physical fitness, and also to combat the faulty perception that increasing age necessarily leads to decreasing physical activity.

Call Ronda at the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program—586-RSVP.

Heating Water with Solar in Western Washington

Saturday, July 13, 11AM - 1PM
Place to be announced

Local solar expert, Brad Bassett, will discuss different, cost-effective ways to heat water using energy from the sun, focusing on what works best for the Pacific Northwest. Brad will use a working mockup solar water heater to further demonstrate basic solar technology. Current solar resources will be provided.

Free to public. Call 943-4595 for info and place or drop by the Energy Outreach Center 512 East Fourth St, downtown Olympia. ♦

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

PFLAG OLYMPIA'S TV SERIES, "ALL OUT!"

5:00 PM Friday, July 5 and 10:30 AM Sunday, July 7:
"AN UNEXPECTED JOURNEY" —Produced by the Denver, Colorado, PFLAG, this program helps us understand gay issues from the parents' perspective and suggests ways we can be supportive of our gay loved ones as they go through troubled times in their lives.

5:00 PM Friday, July 12 and 10:30 AM, Sunday, July 14:
"OUR BROTHER DAN" This is the story of one young man who found he was gay, then found he had AIDS. The story ends with his death, but the journey of insight, love and understanding is deeply moving. Produced by the Reformed Church in America and Princeton Theological Seminary, it is told by Dan's sisters.

5:00 PM Friday, July 19 and 10:30 AM Sunday, July 21:
"POSITIVE IMAGE" From PFLAG Los Angeles come these powerful, beautiful stories of parents and gay youth who enrich their relationships with honesty, trust and true family values, as they learn together what it means to have gay members in a loving and supportive family.

5:00 PM Friday, July 26 and 10:30 AM Sunday, July 28
"GROWING UP GAY" Few people have explained so clearly as today's speaker what it means to grow up as a gay child and youth in our American culture. Author, lecturer and corporate consultant Brian McNaught, with his finger on the pulse of gay America, shares his passion and understanding with a PFLAG meeting in Denver, Colorado.

5:00 PM Friday August 2 and 10:30 AM Sunday, August 4
"HOMOPHOBIA IN THE WORKPLACE" With humor and joy, author-lecturer-corporate consultant Brian McNaught points to the workplace as a risky place to be known as gay. But with sparkling stories he helps families of gays learn the value of an even playing field for all.

FRIDAY NIGHTS AT LIBERATION CAFE

Cafe opens Friday evenings and events start at 7:30pm
Olympia Political Cultural Center is 116 4th Ave E (Top floor of Bulldog News)

June 5th Class Consciousness Presentation and Discussion
June 12th Formation of a Labor Party with Sara Ryan, Postal Worker and Labor Studies Instructor

June 19th Music with local artist Reva

June 26th Presentation and Discussion on the Cuban

Revolution with Rick Fellows, Pastors for Peace

August 2nd Discussion and Presentation of Detroit News Strike, Gannett and organizing a boycott of the *Olympian* with KAOS host Clint Burelson

August 9th Discussion/Presentation on AIDS by Olympia AIDS Prevention Projects

August 16th Report on the Gathering in Chiapas Against Neoliberalism with Hilaria Cruz

August 23rd Report on Students for Democratic Society Reunion and where the 60s movement has gone with Peter Bohmer, social justice activist

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June 30 - July 3: *Denise Calls Up; the Flower of My Secret*

July 7 - July 10: *dead man; Young Poisoner's Handbook*

July 11: *The Bride with White Hair*

July 14 - July 17: *Wild Bill; Hollywood Maverick; dead man*

July 21 - July 24: *Nico Icon; Captives*

July 27: *Switchblade Sisters*

July 28 - July 31: *Celluloid Closet; Cold Fever*

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Along the Color Line

Racism: America's Continuing Dilemma

Dr. Manning Marable

America's greatest challenge in the twenty-first century is the division of race — whether whites, African-Americans and other racial and ethnic minorities can live together on the basis of fairness and equality. Despite the victories of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and legislative reforms, racial discrimination and socioeconomic inequality continues to compromise and undermine efforts for African-American empowerment.

Why does the racial impasse still exist in America? Part of the answer requires an examination of white American attitudes and opinions about black people.

In a democracy, political power theoretically is based on the principles of popular participation, majority rule and respect for minority rights. By this standard, African-Americans were denied democratic rights throughout most of their history in this country. Historically, white mainstream America has not attempted to achieve a reconciliation between the reality of human diversity — based in divergent racial and ethnic identities, languages, cultures, religions, and

other factors — and the basic principles of political democracy.

For a brief but powerful moment in US history, the meaning of "racism" was generally understood by the majority of all Americans, black and white. During the Civil Rights Movement, racial inequality was sharply represented by the harsh reality of Jim Crow segregation in the South and ghettoization in the North. It was this general recognition that American society was essentially unfair and undemocratic to black people that a range of civil rights legislation and democratic reforms was passed in the

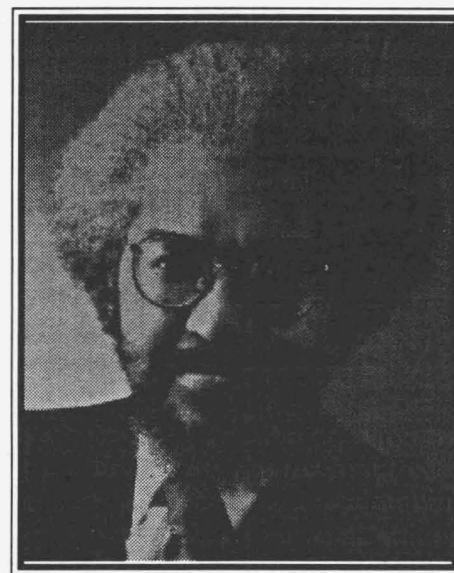
stratification and the polarization of social classes, with millions of white middle income families experiencing a decline in their standard of living; the massive deindustrialization and loss of jobs in major cities with large minority populations, and the rise of suburbs and "planned communities"; the ideological and political victories of conservatism, from the Reagan Revolution of the 1980s to the "Contract With America" in the 1990s; and the political reaction against affirmative action, majority-minority legislative districts, minority economic set-asides, and other liberal reforms. All

Racism won't end by itself, until blacks and other people of color have expanded access to the power and resources of the larger society.

1960s.

By the 1980s and 1990s, white public attitudes and opinions about blacks had greatly changed. The redefinition of race was the consequence of many divergent economic, social and political forces: the growing income

of these factors, as well as others, helped to create a general public belief among millions of whites that any debt they may have felt for the enslavement, segregation or oppression of black Americans, had been fully paid. Many whites became convinced that civil rights and affirmative action were attempts by blacks and other racial minorities to win "special privileges." "Whiteness" once again be-



gan to define the limitation of American democracy.

Transcending the racial divide will require an honest and critical dialogue, between blacks and whites. The issue is not one of "good intentions," but rather the reallocation of resources, access to institutional support and investment capital, and the expansion of the social safety net to promote individual and group productivity and initiative. Racism won't end by itself, until blacks and other people of color have expanded access to the power and resources of the larger society. If whites can learn to listen to that reality, we might finally begin to take the necessary steps to uproot racial discrimination and class inequality, once and for all.

Dr. Manning Marable is Professor of History and Director of the Institute for Research in African-American Studies at Columbia University, New York City. "Along the Color Line" appears in over 280 publications throughout the US and internationally. ♦

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— Katherine Mansfield



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From the Inside Out

Join the Evolution

Dan Pens

Have you ever thought about "ideas" in evolutionary terms? It's an interesting concept. Imagine that every "idea" is a biological organism. For an idea to flourish its prime objective must be to reproduce. Its offspring must also exhibit a propensity for survival and reproduction.

How does an idea reproduce? If I communicate an idea to ten others, it has been "reproduced" ten times. The crucial test, however, relates to how well that second generation competes in the environment of ideas; how many of those ten people will pass it on? It's a matter of natural selection. Survival of the fittest.

Let's say I have an idea that the Earth is a giant olive, and we are floating in an unimaginably large galactic martini; when happy hour comes we'll all be swallowed (certainly an odd mutant of an idea). I could share that idea with thousands of people, but the prospects of it being reproduced beyond that are rather slim. I'd say that's one idea destined for extinction.

Here's one, however, which I have high hopes for: Why not peg Congressional salaries to the Federal Minimum Wage? For starters the annual salary of a Senator could be pegged to 10,000 times the hourly minimum wage. That means a US Senator would earn \$42,500 a year (10,000 x \$4.25). How long do you think it would take Congress to raise the minimum wage to, say, \$7.50/hr? It's a pretty simple idea. Whenever Congress wants to give themselves a raise, they have to give *us* one, too. It's an idea whose time has come. Let it be fruitful and multiply. Do your part to help reproduce this idea until it becomes part of the Zeitgeist of the voting public.

Hmmm...but it seems that the "voting public" doesn't include a lot of us these days. Only 38.8 percent of *eligible* voters participated in the 1994 elections. A mere 50 percent are expected to vote in the upcoming Presidential elections. And those are percentages of *registered* voters. How many tens of millions don't bother to register? (Not to mention 1.5 million disenfranchised prisoners whose right to vote went up the river when they were convicted).

The low turnout is usually attributed to "voter apathy" by the mainstream press. But is it really apathy? How about you? Did you vote in the '94 elections? Do you plan to vote this fall? If you answered "No" to either of those questions, I'd like you to take this simple Voter Apathy Test:

You are dragged into a voting booth at gunpoint. There are two levers. One labeled Clinton, the other Dole. The gun is cocked, the safety removed. You are instructed to pull one of the levers. If you comply, perhaps you have indeed been suffering from voter apathy and just needed this extra motivation to get out and vote. If, on the other hand, you say, "Go ahead and pull the trigger. I'd rather be shot than vote for either of these clowns,"

The interests of working people are sacrificed in order for the corporate media to fatten its gross margin. Major newspapers build their high-income demographics not only through editorial policy. They actually discourage low-income readers from buying their papers.

then I have news for you. That's not apathy. You have very strong political convictions. The reason you don't vote is because your interests are not represented by the Democratic or Republican candidates. The two parties have grown so similar that voting has no more significance than choosing between Pepsi and Coke. Come to think of it, political campaigns and slogans have about as much substance as a soft-drink commercial.

So what can you do with your political convictions if not vote? Too many people answer, "Nothing." But there are many things you can do. You're doing one of them right now — reading the alternative press. Thomas Jefferson observed that the most powerful force in a democracy is public opinion. Today public opinion is scrupulously shaped by the corporate media to serve the interests of the stock and bond holding class.

That sentence may sound a bit paranoid-radical. Let me clarify. The for-profit mass media serves the interest of its bottom line. A significant portion of their revenue is derived from advertisers. Let's take a big city newspaper for example. The newspaper can charge more for its advertising space if they can demonstrate that they have "good demographics." That is, if the paper can show advertisers that a large portion of its readers are high-income consumers (i.e. have a

lot of disposable income), they can charge a premium for their advertising space. Thus, the editors of this paper are instructed to "target" high-income readers with an editorial bias designed to appeal to that demographic. News stories about the struggles of working and poor people to obtain political and economic justice generally don't fall into that category.

The interests of working people are sacrificed in order for the corporate media to fatten its gross margin.

Major newspapers build their high-income demographics not only through editorial policy. They actually discourage low-income readers from buying their papers. According to *EXTRA!* (a media watchdog publication) the *Los Angeles Times* actually

sells its paper for less (\$.30) in wealthier areas of LA and charges more (\$.50) in poorer neighborhoods.

Try this simple experiment and see if our local dailies follow another demographic-shaping marketing ploy. Go to an upscale neighborhood and shop for a major local daily newspaper. Stop at a convenience store, a gas station, a strip mall, and a liquor store. Note whether the paper is sold at each of these outlets and whether or not it is prominently displayed. Select a random ten-square-block area in a wealthy residential neighborhood and count the number of coin-operated newspaper boxes.

Now, go to a poor area of the city and repeat the above experiment. A researcher did this in LA and found that the *Times* was aggressively marketed in upscale neighborhoods. In comparison, the paper was sold at fewer outlets in poorer sections of Los Angeles and was generally less prominently displayed. It would surprise me if the results of that experiment could not be reproduced in Seattle or any large city.

It's a simple business formula: Disenfranchisement of the working poor = Demographics = Profit.

One way for working people to regain some power is to read and support the alternative press. Don't buy, read or watch corporate media. If you don't make more than \$50,000

a year, they are not speaking to you anyway. Switch to the alternative press. And don't be content with merely keeping yourself informed. Turn others onto the free press. Share this copy of WIP with a friend or family member. Get them excited about reading the alternative press.

If you enjoy reading WIP, then I encourage you to check out an issue (and subscribe) to any of the following publications. If your local book store or magazine stand does not sell these publications, ask why they don't.

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Washington DC 20005
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Dollars and Sense
One Summer Street
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\$18.95/yr (6 issues)

EXTRA!
Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR)
PO Box 170, Dept. VFU
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\$19/yr

Monthly Review
An Independent Socialist Magazine
122 West 27th Street
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\$25/yr (12 issues)

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PO Box 37074
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\$21.95 (24 weekly issues)

North Coast Xpress
PO Box 1226
Occidental, CA 95465
\$20/yr (6 issues)

The Progressive
PO Box 421
Mount Morris, IL 61054-9939
\$20/yr (12 issues)

Turning the Tide
Journal of Anti-Racist Activism
People Against Racist Terror (PART)
PO Box 1990
Burbank, CA 91507
\$15/yr

Z Magazine
18 Millfield Street
Woods Hole, MA 02543
\$26/yr

This is by no means a complete list. My apologies to those of you who think I should have included *Mother Jones*, *Utne Reader*, *The Village Voice*, or a score of other publications. I also omitted some good local publications such as the *Washington Free Press*, *The Stranger*, and perhaps others that I am unfamiliar with; I don't "get out" much these days.

That's all for this month. Until next time, greetings from the gulag.

Dan Pens is co-editor of Prison Legal News. A free sample of PLN is available upon request by writing to:

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Macedonia: Women in a Transforming Society

Tom Lineham

Macedonia film director Milcho Manchevski's acclaimed *Before the Rain* poignantly captured the essence behind sexual relations in his native country. In the film, an angered Albanian brother murders his sister for falling in love with a Macedonian.

While the event may not represent a contemporary situation in the newly independent country Macedonia, one only need look 140 miles northward to the well documented barbarous rapes and murders by predominantly Serb (Orthodox) men against predominantly Bosnian Muslim women to understand that ethnic and religious prejudice guides both national and domestic relations in the Balkans and Macedonia.

During my April tour of the ancient land once the domain of Alexander the Great, a man who might have had a more tolerant taste for sexual freedom than the present inhabitants in the region, I easily discerned the role of women in the Macedonian society is still defined by classical lines. Modern urban women appear to enjoy more freedom of movement and association than their rural sisters.

Pondering these images and thoughts, I met with Savka Todorovska, the busy president of the Union of Women's Organizations of the Republic of Macedonia, which represents 25 women's groups and organizations and boasts a membership of 25,000. The groups include chapters for Roma, Vlach and Serbian women in this multi-ethnic society. Serving as Todorovska's interpreter, Olga Murdzeva-Skaric from Mothers for Peace, also provided perspectives on the role of women in the new Macedonian society.

"Individual rights, including women's rights have weakened since independence, partly because of the economic situation," the energetic, blonde Todorovska explained through Olga. "Macedonian women are concentrating on basic survival issues."

Once Macedonia declared independence in 1992, it immediately recognized and took part in the interna-

tional embargo against Serbia, its major trading partner in the region. Causing further economic woes, Greece closed the border between the two countries to protest the adoption of the new country name by the Skopje government. Until recently, Macedonia could not use the Greek port city of Salonika which 70% of Macedonia's international trade went through.

Even before these developments, Macedonia had not fully recovered from a decade-long period of economic decline and turmoil when the vast Yugoslavian socialist apparatus fell apart with massive inflation and unemployment. Today the country is performing at only 30 percent of its manufacturing capability and many firms face bankruptcy as the once state-supported companies attempt to privatize. As Russians and others have learned to their chagrin, privatization is much easier said than accomplished. As locals are fond of

Macedonia only occupy five chairs in the democratically elected parliament. They only hold one cabinet position in the new coalition government, recently revised in April. This prompted the Union and Todorovska to write a letter of protest to President Gligorov. At this writing, the President had not responded to the women's concerns.

"Since so many women are fully occupied at home," Todorovska observed, "few have time to join the national political parties."

Olga often broke from her interpreter's role and made no bones about her skepticism of my mission to learn more about Macedonia as an outsider. The round-faced, middle aged woman of distinct German stock questioned the role and the agenda of international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) which operate in Macedonia.

"NGOs attempt to put everything into ethnic terms thus ignoring individual rights," Murdzeva-Skaric ar-

"Individual rights, including women's rights have weakened since independence, partly because of the economic situation, Macedonian women are concentrating on basic survival issues." – Todorovska

saying the Macedonian economy is "catastroph!"

"Women have become the most endangered stratum, the first to lose their jobs," Todorovska lamented. "We have put too much emphasis on the country's name. What we need is more vision."

Macedonian women's groups have focused their efforts, instead, on addressing the increased incidence of violence against women and children experienced now in many Macedonian families, due in part, to the stress brought on by the uncertain economy. Mothers for Peace, for instance, organized a SOS telephone number staffed by women volunteers to help women in crisis.

Most of the calls deal with aggressive behavior by males against girl friends, wives, and children.

On the political front, women in

gued. Other Macedonians expressed similar concerns to me during my stay. George Cepunoyski, an economic professor at St. Cyril and St. Methodius University, worried about "parallel institutions" growing in the country where the muezzin's call to prayer often rivals the nasal singing of the Orthodox priest.

Vladimir Milchin, a human rights activist during Tito's time and now director of the Open Society Institute, agreed that there is a growing concern among some domestic NGOs that the international organizations' influence often reinforces the existing ethnic divisions. Some think this might help to contribute to another Bosnia.

Albanian women, while supporting some of the Union's activities, maintain a separate organization for its members, thus reinforcing Cepunoyski's concerns. For instance, an Albanian primary school English teacher from Tetovo told me she felt women in Albania enjoyed better rights than Albanian women living in Macedonia, in terms of personal freedom within the family.

Some of this sentiment derives from the images Albanian-Macedonian women see on Albanian television, which is widely available particularly in western Macedonia where much of the 400,000 Albanian-Macedonian population resides. TV programs beamed in from Tirana, depict very modernized Albanian women dressed in western-styled clothing, singing disco and pop songs and revealing their more fleshy parts contrary, to the accepted practice in more fundamental Muslim societies.

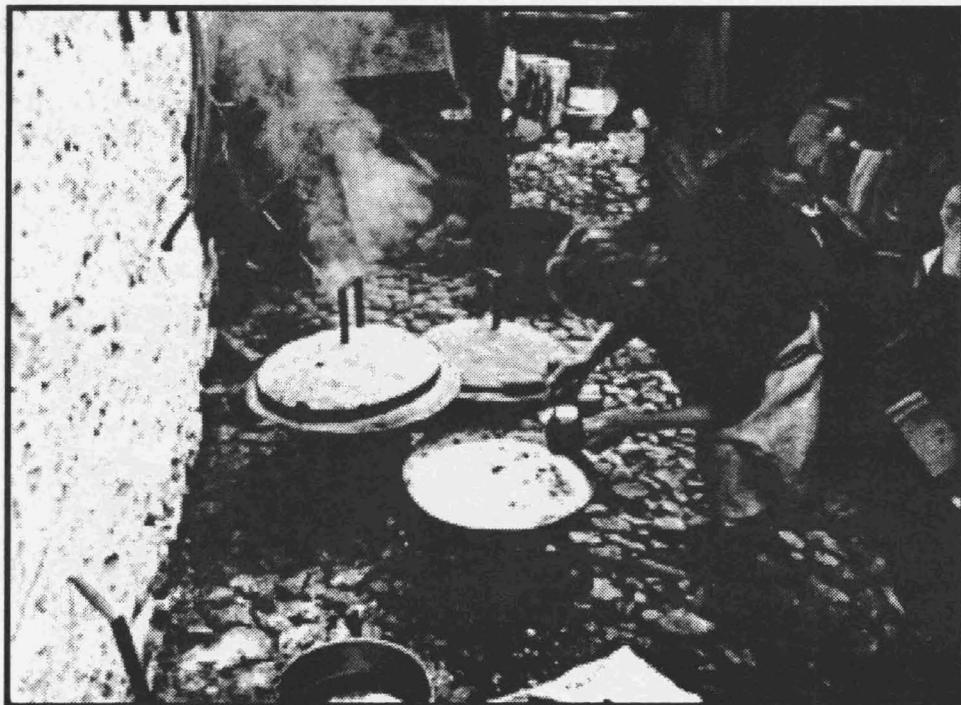
There is a certain irony in this situ-

ation. Perhaps, one of the few constructive things Enver Hoxha, the longtime Albanian communist dictator, accomplished was to promote more avenues in which women could aspire. This seemingly enlightened perspective, like most things the dictator did, came from strictly pragmatic political motivations. He did so to break the back of the strong, patriarchal tribal leadership he felt could threaten him. With more access to education and employment opportunities and protected by the government to do so, Albanian women broke from the traditional fetters of a patriarchal, Muslim system.

That the role of Albanian women in Macedonia is different is underscored by the widely-rumored instance when the then Yugoslavia government endeavored to train Albanian women in the then People's Republic of Macedonia to work in a newly-built Tetovo factory. In a sign of how the traditional roles remain still potent, no women employees turned up on opening day to work. Their husbands refused to let them to go. While the veil is strictly forbidden, the traditional headscarves for Albanian-Macedonian women are still widely seen.

Like the rest of society in Macedonia, the prospect for women rests on the much hoped renewed fortunes following the nation's transition into a market-based economy. Yet, some women don't see any panaceas in the future and resort to more dreamlike notions on how they may escape their current fates, such as 16 year old Elena from Struga. When I asked the secondary school student about the future of women of her generation, she professed a grave abhorrence of politics in general and questioned the restrictions placed on her by her traditional parents, a local police inspector and a primary school teacher. (Not unlike most American teens). Her solution? "I hope some day I can come and live in America. That is my only hope!" she said.

The dreams which Elena and many of her generation of Macedonian women harbor seem understandable in light of the grinding poverty and limited options. A collective claustrophobia has affected many in this diminutive country because few can afford to cross its borders. However, the chief challenge for Savka and Olga is getting the Elenas of Macedonia to feel they have a stake in today's Macedonia and stay to fight the battles. ♦



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The Growing Socioeconomic Crisis

Gene Hoover

There is an increasing local and national belief that today's poverty and homelessness in the United States is primarily the result of personal shortcomings. This view, however, distracts us from recognizing the impacts of the economic realities of our time. This report uses two economic indicators, loss of real wages and wealth disparity, to demonstrate that the growing socioeconomic crisis, which is already a reality for millions of Americans, is not of their own making. While specific solutions are not offered here, steps to help mitigate the affects of this growing crisis must be intellectually sound and spiritually based.

A March 1994 Commerce Department study titled *The Earnings Ladder*

lower paying service jobs. However, as service sector jobs are now also being replaced⁵, we must ask ourselves, how long before significant job losses, not just significant wage losses begin to appear?

Productivity gains, due primarily to technological advances are blamed for producing huge dividends for some and lower wages and loss of jobs for others. The problem, however, is not technology; the problem is both a lack of coordinating the incorporation of technology and a failure to more adequately share the technological productivity gains with the people. On December 31, 1979, the Dow Jones Industrial Average closed at 838.74. On January 31, 1996, the Dow closed at 5,395.30, well over a six-fold gain since 1979. In a 1995 pre-Labor Day speech, Labor Secretary Robert Reich said, "The economy has

this inequality continues in the U.S. that "the nation has little hope of avoiding serious social strife".

Being poor and living in a tent or being rich and living in a mansion is not, in any way, a measure of one's strength, weakness, character, or value. Any attempt to paint whole economic groups with such a broad brush is ultimately, I believe, counter-productive. However, as more people leave the middle income group and gravitate towards the extremes of the economic spectrum, it becomes increasingly more difficult to relate to one another. Those with influence and resources often feel justified in their contempt for those with little. Those who feel left out of the economic prosperity and who, indeed, may feel that they have lost at other's gain sometimes feel resentment.

Very divergent economic classes have a tendency to be separated physically and mentally from one another, either by circumstance or choice. The poor are often in pockets of deprivation, while many of those more affluent have moved to the suburbs or live in walled-off communities with private security services. Modes of transportation, shopping options, child care, health care, vacation opportunities or lack thereof, educational and job opportunities are all vastly different depending on how much wealth one possesses. Two economically divergent families may be living in the same city or even right next door, but it may seem to both that the other family is from a different planet. The circumstances and everyday experiences of the rich and the poor are usually so vastly different that distrust, fear, and ignorance about one another can easily become the basis for stereotyping and dehumanization.

Americans are, by and large, ignoring the growing socioeconomic crisis in this country. In part, this is because the focus has been directed to the perceived character flaws of the poor and other marginalized groups. The character flaws (imperfections) and misdeeds of even a small per-

centage of the wealthy and influential, however, can not only be devastating to the less well-positioned populace, but are often sheltered from scrutiny or diverted towards others.

If there is to be progress towards economic justice and easing of the current crisis, there must be a fundamental change of attitude and priorities. These changes must be brought about through a balance of prayer (communication with God), study, and action - Spirit, mind, and body. What is most imperative, though, is that we seek True Understanding and act accordingly. Although homelessness and poverty, just as affluence and wealth, can greatly affect our personal well-being and our perspective and perception of others, they are only measures of material standing. God does not smite or bless any economic group with distinct character flaws or virtues. God, instead, looks underneath our material standing to see who we are, as we are - individual children of God.

Notes

1. U.S. Commerce Dept., *The Earnings Ladder*, The Los Angeles Times, March 31, 1994.
2. Roberts, Steven V., *Workers Take It On the Chin*, U.S. News and World Report, Jan. 22, 1996, p44 (Chart shows real average weekly earning dropping from \$298 in 1970 to \$256 in 1994, using 1982 dollars, or 14.1%).
3. Whitmire, Richard, *Plight of Poor a Rallying Cry*, Gannett News Service, Feb. 2, 1996.
4. Rifkin, Jeremy, *The End of Work*, G.P. Putnam's Sons 1995, p 8
5. Rifkin, pp 144 and 162 (Banks eliminated 179,000 human tellers between 1983 and 1994 or 37% of their workforce, replacing them with automated teller machines).
6. Reich, Robert. Associated Press, Sept. 1, 1995.
7. National Catholic Reporter, *Top One Percent Holds 40 Percent of the Wealth*, April 28, 1995.

Special thanks to Randy Shaw. ♦

"The economy has caught fire... but the gains to most workers have gone up in smoke. Jobs disappear and the market cheers." - Reich

showed that 18% of Americans with full-time jobs had earnings of less than \$13,091 in 1992. In 1979, only 12 percent of all full-time workers earned comparable wages¹. A 50% increase in full-time workers making poverty wages is the cold reality for those who are just managing to maintain some stake in our shared economy.

Americans in general are also more anxious about the new economic climate. Unemployment rates are about the same today as they were in the seventies, but real wages have fallen dramatically. Between 1970 and 1994, real average weekly earnings have fallen by 14%² overall. Since 1979, wages have fallen 19% for workers under age 25³. As manufacturing productivity increased by 35%⁴ since 1979, more people have been absorbed into

caught fire... but the gains to most workers have gone up in smoke. Jobs disappear and the market cheers."⁶

The second, yet closely related, indicator of the growing crisis is the escalating wealth disparity between the rich and poor. This gap exists not just because the poor have gotten poorer but the rich have gotten much richer. Currently, nearly one percent of U.S. households owns nearly 40% of the nation's wealth⁷. In an April 28, 1995 National Catholic Reporter article, Edward N. Wolff, an economics professor at New York University was quoted as saying, "We are the most unequal industrialized country in terms of income and wealth and we're growing more unequal faster than the other industrialized countries." The article goes on to point out that if

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Founding Convention of the Labor Party of America What Happened in Cleveland?

Dave Zink

It's been a prolonged, and at times painful, birthing process, but we now have a boisterous, lively baby on the American political scene.

The founding convention of about 1400 delegates representing a wide range of labor unions from across the USA was called to order on Thursday, June 6th. After an energetic singing of the National Anthem, we prayed for guidance in our efforts to rebuild a better America.

Bob Wages, president of the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers International Union gave the first major speech. "We can't be afraid to organize a political party that represents the working class of this country," he said. "There's a lot more of us than there are of the corporate elite. If we organize, we can reclaim some of the power that's been taken away from We, the People. Why us? Organized labor - the union movement - is the only force capable of standing up against the organized corporate ruling class".

More excerpts from Wages' talk: "Now, some pundits may say that we're not in the mainstream. Those who tell you that have been out of the mainstream for so long they wouldn't recognize it if they fell in!" "We're at a crossroads. Will we have a nation of caring, or of greed? Will we have a society run in the interests of the monied class, or by those who really make it run every day?" "This is the

beginning of a long journey. We will either do it together, or not at all. It can be done, if we organize around a few good points that everybody understands. We can't be all things to all people." "If not now, when? If not here, where? If not us, who?"

The main business of the convention was hammering out a party constitution and platform. How would the Labor Party function? What would it stand for? Interspersed with the nuts & bolts business, however, were a number of musical interludes and inspirational speakers. The Labor Party definitely has its fair share of talented and bright people.

On Friday morning, Jim Hightower, former Texas commissioner of Agriculture and the host of a popular radio talk show, addressed the convention. In the Hightower style, reminiscent of Will Rogers, he told of the relationship between working people and the Democratic Party. "It reminds me of that old blues song that goes: 'Honey,

Aunt Beulah used to say if we want the water to clear up, we need to get the hogs out of the creek!" "Farmers and Labor are allies. We may not have all come over in the same boat, but we're all in the same boat now!"

"The real political spectrum in America isn't right to left," Hightower said, "its top to bottom." "We don't have to go out and create a progressive movement. It's already here. All we need to do is organize and focus it. Don't put down the agitator - we need them: the agitator is the center-part of a washing machine that gets the dirt out! Don't put down the evangelical right: they are with us on the economic issues, even if they're not there on all the social issues." Speaking of the need to unite the many to defeat the few, he said, "There are a lot more alley cats than fat cats: use every resource available and **organize!**"

After his talk, I asked Jim Hightower if he would consider running for public office on the LPA ticket, maybe in 2000.

"The real political spectrum in America isn't right to left, its top to bottom. We don't have to go out and create a progressive movement. It's already here. All we need to do is organize and focus it." - Hightower

if there's just you and me, then who's making all them dirty dishes?"

The "D's" and the "R's" are both wearing the same Guccis these days. The National Democratic Party passed NAFTA and GATT benefitting the corporate elite, but failed to pass legislation that would benefit the rest of us, like the Workplace Fairness Act, which would have restored the right to strike by making it illegal to hire scabs during a labor dispute. "How are we to feel about something like that? Did the dog-bite heal? Yes, but I never did feel like petting that dog again!" The main reason the Republicans made such big gains in the '94 elections was that most working people saw precious little difference between the two major parties and stayed home. "How can we clean up the political scene in this country? When will the water clear up? My

"No", he said. "There are a lot of capable people right in the LPA. I'm going to continue to play Johnny Appleseed and prepare the way."

Ralph Nader spoke later Friday afternoon. Excerpts: "In one area after another, the corporations are dismantling our democracy. HMO's are taking your medical choices away, dictating what providers you can or can't see, and what procedures you can or can't have. There is a lot of injustice - downright crimes - against the consumer and the environment that is coming from the powerful few. Labor is the fighter for the American Dream. The LPA is the rebirth of the labor movement after its long subordination to the corporations who have no allegiance to community, workers, or nation."

On Saturday, Baldemar Velasquez

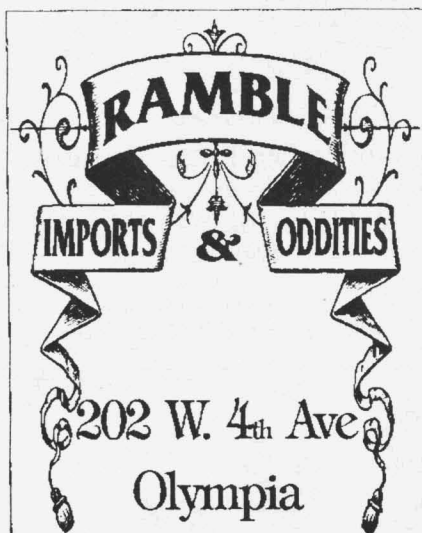
of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) spoke on a variety of topics. His experiences have clearly shown how important it is never to give up. He was told by many that he should forget about trying to organize farm workers, who are usually migrant, temporary workers supposedly "impossible" to organize. "We farm workers won some victories not because we thought we would win, but because we did the right thing! And it wasn't easy: it took 8 years. But it was worth it. The only way working people can stand up to multi-national corporations is to organize, wherever we are." "Something just is happening," he said. "There is going to be a shake-up like never before. Corporations, through their TV and mass media, are putting forth a distorted, phony view. Its not reality. Development of human relationships is what's real: that's the important thing, not buying what's advertised on TV."

There were about twenty Farm Worker delegates at the convention. A woman from this contingent got up to address the issue of immigration from south of the border. "The cause of all the immigration is American foreign policy", she pointed out. Americans would be ashamed if the full details of US intervention in Guatemala, El Salvador, and other Latin American countries was brought to light. Death squads trained in this country's School of the Americas (Fort Benning, Georgia) are torturing innocents. Life is being made impossible in those countries. For too many, there is no alternative to emigration!"

The platform adopted by the convention is a good one. It includes things like:

- a \$10. minimum wage indexed to today's price level.
 - repeal Taft-Hartley and strengthen rights to form unions
 - universal, single-payer health care
 - a 32-hour work-week
 - 15:1 student-teacher ratio
 - an end to "corporate welfare"
 - an adequate - not impoverishing - military defense (this alone would realize a savings of \$ billions)
 - a revitalized public sector
 - worker-inspectors to enforce workplace safety and health standards
 - restore fairness to our tax system: the wealthy should pay their fair share
- Some very contentious issues were debated. It came as no surprise that

(Continued next page)



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(Cleveland, Continued)

the most contentious part of the platform construction process was the reproductive choice issue. Most wanted to have an umbrella wide enough to bring as many as possible into the LPA. Some wanted more explicit language. The majority apparently agreed with the woman who said, "Many women can be with us 100% on the rest of the issues. But if we have clear pro-abortion language in the platform, we'd be seen as baby-killers!" The language as adopted into the platform was:

"For informed choice and unimpeded access to a full range of family planning and reproductive services for men and women."

The vote: 629 votes for more explicit wording, and 1729 votes for the language as adopted. One woman advocating a stronger statement walked out after her side lost.

On Sunday morning, Jerry Brown, former Governor of California and contender for the 1992 Democratic Party nomination for President addressed the convention. He spoke about the corruption and moral bankruptcy of the two major Parties. "When the chips are down, the D's and the R's are always found in the enemy camp. Dole and Gingrich are taking this country down the road to environmental and economic collapse. Clinton and Gore are taking us down the same road, just slower. The words "union" and "justice" aren't even in the Democratic Party platform! You cannot provide for justice with cold economics. Economics is a cold, hard science. You must challenge corporate power with demands for economic justice. Don't depend upon the "magic of the market" for this: it'll never happen!"

Another contentious issue was that of electoral policy and strategy. Would the LPA run candidates? When? It was decided by the vast majority not to enter an LPA ticket in the '96 or '98 elections, and no commitment was made to enter the 2000 races. The convention agreed with the speaker who said, "Elections come and go. The real goal is to build a movement that can survive and grow." To do this, the resolution as adopted states:

"Our organizing approach to poli-

tics recognizes that electoral action comes only after recruiting and mobilizing hundreds of thousands of workers with sufficient financial resources to take on an electoral system dominated by the corporations and the wealthy."

According to this strategy, the main thing now is to develop a campaign to organize the unorganized, go from union to union, and from door to door to gather support for the LPA, and conduct other, non-electoral political action. Then, in the second national LPA convention two years from now, these issues will be re-assessed, re-evaluated, and the next steps will be formulated.

This sounds reasonable, but personally speaking, I have a real problem with it. True, America's electoral system is unfairly dominated by the wealthy. But does that mean we should not use every resource available to us to get our message out and grow? Election campaigns are an important means by which we working people are organized, educated, and mobilized to effectively defend our interests every day between elections. Elections provide a public focus, an opportunity to get some fresh ideas out to the general public. Even if we were soundly thumped the first few times, it would be a learning experience. By presenting a clear, positive choice, the LPA would grow. AFL-CIO President Sweeney claims to have amassed a "war chest" of \$35 million that he wants to spend on electing Democrats - even though that kind of money could go a long way in reaching out to those that are looking for something more meaningful than "lesser-evil" politics as usual.

Many in the LPA are not satisfied with this decision. The main organized force to advocate active electoral politics was the International Longshore Workers Union. And, the Wyoming LPA has opted to run a slate of candidates for the '96 general elections.

The Labor Party of America is very much a "Work in Progress".

The genie is out of the bottle. Working people of America now have a Labor Party to fight for their interests. How vigorous will this baby be? Will she thrive? How long a life will she enjoy? Only time will tell. The real question is: Will enough people identify with this new party, get involved as LPA activists, and call her their own? If so, this child has a great future.

Copies of the LPA Constitution, the party platform "A Call for Economic Justice", and "A New Organizing Approach to Politics" are available upon request. Contact Dave Zink if you would like a copy. ♦

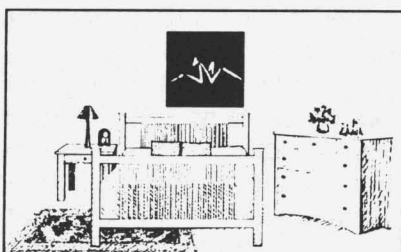
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in events
present great drama
and music
and address itself
to the ideal
of excellence
not the idea of
acceptability."

- E.B. White

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(Vote, Continued)

subsequent victory proved that an economic populist platform resonated with independent and swing voters.

Second, check out what's been in the news lately. The Kathie Lee Gifford sweatshop scandal, the "Corporate Killers" cover on Newsweek, the minimum wage ruckus, advocacy for a maximum wage, intensified scrutiny of CEO salaries, outcry over child slave labor—I'll say it again folks, this issue is here to stay despite the fact that both Dole and Clinton, whose every word is news these days, have practically ignored it.

Lastly, history shows that progressive economic issues can win when big business proves itself to be irresponsible in a relaxed regulatory environment. This is what happened a century ago when the original progressive movement aimed its sights at a corporate environment awash in scandal and monopoly-building (just as today corporate mergers are everyday news). Theodore Roosevelt, and to a lesser extent William Taft, were able to hold off the Democrats with mild economic reforms (e.g. regulating railroad taxes and the dissolution of oil and tobacco trusts) because it took several years for the people's issues to get a majority on to the House floor.

The 1912 election was remarkably similar to the 1992 election, in that Theodore Roosevelt, running on his maverick Bull Moose Party ticket, split the Republican vote, just as Perot did. Woodrow Wilson won and eventually went on to a second term, barely defeating Charles Evans Hughes in 1916 by only 23 electoral votes. Hughes, although a Republican, earned a name for himself by being a Nader-like crusader fighting for insurance reform and investigating utility rates in his home state of New York. The fact that Hughes ran against Wilson on progressive issues exemplifies the power that the people of this country used to have on how their government was run. Such accountability has been swallowed up by corporate influence over both parties and the voter apathy this influence engenders.

Voters must fully reject the "two party" system

In sum, to quote the *Wall St. Journal*, "On issue after issue, Mr. Clinton and his administration have come down on the same side as corporate America." Wake up and smell the coffee, voters; a vote for Clinton (or against Dole, really) is a vote for continued government collusion with corporate America. It's a vote for children working 16 hour days in Guatemala for forty cents an hour, a vote for the salvage rider that is gutting

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- To avoid common sources of fraud, do not allow your credit or charge card account number to be written on your personal check — particularly if your driver's license number is being recorded as well.

- Do not preprint your social security number on your checks. If a business or other enterprise asks you for your Social Security number, you can refuse to give it to them. However, that may mean doing without the purchase or service for which your number was requested.

- A number of states forbid merchants to record credit or charge card account numbers on personal checks. Merchants are permitted to simply note whether you have a major credit or charge card as an indicator of your "creditworthiness." Exceptions are services like "emergency check cashing," where you have preapproved the use of your card to guarantee your check. Be forewarned, however, merchants may refuse to accept your check if you refuse to allow them to record your card number.

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our Washington forests, a vote for higher cable rates and runaway profits for media moguls courtesy of the Telecommunications bill, a vote for throwing single women in poverty to the wolves while wasting billions on a Mexican bailout that is really bailing out Wall St. investors, and on and on ad nauseum.

The only alternative to the "lesser of two evils" scenario is voting your conscience. The Mr. Mescos of this country have lost their ability to reason at the expense of their conscience. So what if Dole wins? In my opinion it will make the apathetic multitudes who don't bother to vote finally realize that they have something at stake by exercising their democratic privilege.

I have never voted yet for the Republicrats, and I'm not going to start now. When the Demopublicans start getting 19% of the vote, you will be sure to see real candidates talking about real issues. Until then, history shows that all we'll get is more of the same gridlock and indifference. ♦

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A Brief History of Our Ancestors:

The Life, Death and Re-birth of the Traditional Artist Guild

More Rain

The Mediaeval Craft Guild

The craft guilds came into existence in the Middle Ages to protect the shopkeepers, small tradesmen, and craftsmen from the power of the rich merchants who ruled their towns. Their first aim was an economic one: to protect their own businesses. And they did this, first, by looking after the welfare of their members and, second by ensuring that their members were honest.

The guilds established strict rules for their members to follow, to make certain that all goods were of the correct standard. For example, a dyer of cloth in Florence was told exactly what dyes he should use, what strength they had to be, and how many times the material should be dipped in the dye. It was almost like a religious ceremony. The guild of fishermen in Rome determined the size of the fishermen's nets, and the Roman fishmongers had to use scales with holes in them, so that they did not weigh any water along with the fish.

For the most part these regulations were sensible and protected the customer as well as the honor of the guild. But some of the guild's rules were so strict that they seemed restraining. In Florence, the jewelers were not allowed to use imitation stones under any circumstances, and it did not make any difference if the jeweler said they were imitations. Confusion might arise in the future, and the guild must never be suspected of fraud. It was recorded on guild records that a Paris goldsmith once made a gold-plated bowl. He did not intend to sell it as solid gold, but nonetheless, the guild forbade him to sell it at all and warned him not to make any more plated objects.

In some ways, the craft guilds were like a large family. It tried to create a "brotherhood" of craftsmen, and to give all its members a fair chance. No one was allowed to profit at the expense of the others. Suppose a fresh supply of hides arrived in town. The whole lot might be bought by one tanner. He would not be allowed to use them all himself if another tanner needed some. Nor could he sell them to his fellow-tanners at a profit. Some guilds were actually in charge of buying all raw material and then sold it to their members at a standard price. For example, all raw wool entering Florence was bought by the guild, which sold to the wool-weavers at a set rate.

The members of the craft guild were not equally rich, some men being more clever at enterprise than others. The guild tried to retain an egalitarian society by preventing any member from becoming too rich or too poor. The number of workmen and apprentices who could be employed by one craftsman was limited by the guild.

Often, it was at no more than three or four. Members were not allowed to lure workman away from his employer by offering a higher wage.

The craft guilds thus bound their members with many rules and regulations. Within these guidelines the guild members gained protection in for their work. It prevented competition in the work force which might force a member to bankruptcy. By restricting the number of craftsmen in his trade and by preventing outsiders from establishing businesses in the town it protected his livelihood.

Guild membership created a solidarity that other citizens did not have. Sometimes they were excused from paying certain taxes or customs duty. If a man was wronged, the guild would help him to be justly compensated. When business was bad, or the supply of raw materials had been cut off by war, many townspeople were in danger of starving. During these times the guild member were the last to suffer. If his trade suffered as a result of fire or robbery, or through his own illness, the guild helped him build up again. Some guilds even had hospitals for their members.

In the Middle Ages, the most powerful institution in Europe was the Christian Church. Religion ruled

was often paid in goods rather than money. For failing to carry out some duty, a man might have to provide thirty gallons of wine for the next guild feast. It was recorded that a French butcher, who sold some meat at an unfair price had to pay a fine of a pig's carcass. The guild's worst punishment was expulsion. A man who was expelled from the guild could not practice his craft and had no way of earning a living.

Many craft guilds began as illegal associations, and had to struggle to survive. The struggle between the London weavers and the city government was notorious. Similar struggles took place in towns throughout western Europe. By the fourteenth century, the craft guilds had won a legitimate position in society. The more powerful guilds included great men among their members. No less a person than King Edward III of England was a member of the guild of linen-armourers.

Guild Meetings

The meetings of the guilds were serious affairs. All the members attended, and the meeting could begin only when the chest that contained the guild's charter and other symbols of its power was unlocked in a solemn

Guild membership created a solidarity that other citizens did not have. Sometimes they were excused from paying certain taxes or customs duty. If a man was wronged, the guild would help him to be justly compensated.

men's thoughts and actions, whether they were kings or bishops, priests or craftsmen. Many guilds employed a priest to conduct services for the members and say Mass for the dead. If a man died without leaving sufficient funds for his funeral, the guild paid for it. Four of his guild brothers carried the coffin, and all of the guild members were expected to attend the ceremony.

Many guilds had their own patron saint, and their own church. They paid for windows in cathedrals and altars in parish churches. In old city churches today, the coat of arms of craft guilds can often be seen among the memorials to kings and nobles.

The guild member was expected to be not only a good honest tradesman, but also an honorable person. The guild was as much concerned about its members' character as they were for the quality of their work. Wrongdoers could be punished, and in the Middle Ages punishment was severe. Cutting off a hand was a common way of discouraging thieves. Men who were guilty of less serious crimes had to pay a fine to the guild. The fine

ceremony. Many guilds had their own uniform for these occasions. The guilds of London (which still exist) are called Livery Companies, and their livery (uniform) is still worn at ceremonies in the city of London.

The guilds liked to preserve an air of secrecy. No one was supposed to discuss the guild's business outside the guild meeting, and "trade secrets" were jealously concealed from possible rivals. Florentine craftsmen had a method for producing fine silver and gold brocade, which remained a closely guarded secret for many years. In Venice, a law of 1454 laid down terrible penalties for a citizen who took his craft to another state. If he did not return when ordered, his relatives were to be thrown into jail. And if that did not bring him back, the law said that "secret measures will be taken to have him killed."

In England, another word for craft was "mystery," and a spirit of mystery often clung to medieval guilds. This spirit survives today in the society of freemasons. Freemasonry is a semi-secret society, a charity that looks after its own members, and exists

throughout the world. Freemasons are supposed to have signs, like a special kind of handshake, by which they recognize each other. In the past, they had great influence in certain professions, and as a result they made many enemies. However, there is nothing sinister about freemasonry today, although Roman Catholics are still forbidden to join.

Freemasons trace their society back to the medieval guild of masons (builders). The masons were unusual among craftsmen because, unlike other trades, they did not stay in one place. They moved from one building site to the next. At each place they had a lean-to shed, called a lodge (the local branches of freemasons today are still called lodges). The lodge was a workshop, an office, and a club, in fact a home away from home. Sometimes the masons worked on buildings far away from the towns - they built the great, lonely castles of medieval nobles - and they were bound together in the brotherhood of their trade even more closely than other craftsmen.

Demise of the Guilds

In eighteenth century Germany, many of the social structures of the Middle Ages that dealt with misery and misfortune to help make life for the victims more bearable: the cooperative supports of the trade associations, guilds, and neighborhoods were beginning to collapse. One of the rare instances in which the Reichstag acted with dispatch was in the passing the 1731 law concerning the reform of handicrafts, transferring the powers and rights of the guilds to the state.

These were among the stated objectives of the mercantilist drive for making society more efficient. A coupe was made between the aristocracy and the budding bourgeoisie. Help destroy the solidarity of the guilds and the mercantilists could run the new institutions formed in the guilds' stead, thus creating the nouveau riche.

Finally, within this same framework, there developed that family feeling in which responsibility for the well-being of relatives was limited to the immediate family and the needs of distant relatives were ignored. Here, too, officially tolerated or even compulsory female and child labor of families of conscripted men of the country contributed to the loosening of the traditional family structure.

The Past and the Future in the Moment

With the demise of the family in Europe also came the demise of the brotherhoods of guilds. It took workers centuries before they could once again fight against the restraints on their freedoms. We are now looking back into our history, finding solutions and alternatives to the institutions that destroy our autonomy. The Traditional Artists Guild is place for artisans who are looking for ways to better our humanity through creative expressions. Not expressions of anger, shame and blame but expressions of compassion, love and a desire to be free and truly human in this world. Judging others is judging yourself. Put aside the political maneuvers of neo-colonialism and return to the roots we find in our ancestors. All our ancestors. ♦

A New Way to Feel About Your Body

Patti Anne Logan

A New Option

Do you compare yourself to the models on television? Are you ever a 10? Do you worry about summer fashions revealing too much? Do you cringe when you step on the scale? If so, I have an interesting option for you to consider. I invite you to enter the clothing-optional world of nude recreation!

"Whoa, wait a minute, Patti," you say. "No way, not for me!"

Please, give me a few minutes. Having experienced the comfort, safety, and body acceptance of nude recreation, I'd like to challenge a few of the stereotypes you've heard. Our starve-yourself-thin, exercise-till-you-drop, clothing-compulsive society can produce bulimia, anorexia, and other psychological disorders a healthy nude environment can help prevent. Now is the time for you to experience a healthy awareness of your body.

Some Myths

1. The myth of perfect bodies.

We think others have perfect bodies, but ours somehow aren't right. We are much too conscious of how we look in the nude. We have learned to be uncomfortable with ourselves. Women especially have been brainwashed by the media to look upon their bodies with shame. Bodies come in all shapes and sizes. Though not perfect by any arbitrary standard, all bodies are naturally beautiful. Nudity allows us to understand that beauty is only skin deep, to go beyond and find the "real" person beneath all the "glitz" of costumes, cosmetics, and coiffures.

2. The myth of moral decay.

You'll find a fairly representative cross-section of American society relaxing at a nudist resort. Nudists are everyday people. We are contractors, secretaries, nurses, accountants, teachers, government workers, clergy, mothers, fathers, teens, infants, lawyers, doctors, taxi drivers, your friends. We are your next door neighbors, members of the PTA, YMCA, Scouting, Red Cross, your local fire department. We go to your schools, churches, and town meetings. Most of us consider ourselves mainstream Americans.

Nudists tend to be more open-minded and tolerant of others' opinions. We are not superior. We are just a bit more self-assured and confident about who we are.

Nudists generally have sexually well-adjusted children. Children raised as nudists have a healthy attitude and lack of prurient interest in the other sex. They are less likely to have sex as teenagers. For them, puberty is less traumatic. They know from first-hand experience that bodies change.

3. The myth of open sexual activity.

Nudity and sexuality are linked in

many non-nudists' minds. Our culture sure gives that message. The big-busted women and the young women who get propositioned frequently think harassment will intensify if they disrobe.

They are in for a surprise! The uninhibited but peaceful atmosphere of a nudist resort is devoid of sexual innuendoes. Those seeking cheap thrills are soon disappointed that nudist activities are practically asexual. A nudist resort is somewhat like a church camp without the wet bathing suits.

4. The myth of embarrassment.

Many women are embarrassed by the look of their bodies. They fear being laughed at. They wish their bodies could be smoother, slimmer, more athletic. They think of their surgical scars, their cellulite, their stretch

and perky smile belie the fragility of her slender five-foot frame.

Self-composed with her clothes on, Crystal started out feeling horrified at the thought of anyone seeing her naked. She had recently lost over 75 pounds. She saw herself as a mass of ugly wrinkles and rolls of flab.

Then Crystal grew to love a man who was a nudist at heart. His lively sense of humor, lack of shame, and total comfort with his physical body prompted Crystal to look at her own body with a less critical eye. He portrayed for her the relaxed world of nudity! His height, and the wrinkles due to age, illness, and weight loss gave him the look of a garden scarecrow. Even so, he walked around his house in only a T-shirt.

Once she had experienced freedom and acceptance from her companion, Crystal welcomed my invitation to come to my nudist club event with

Nudity allows us to understand that beauty is only skin deep, to go beyond and find the "real" person beneath all the "glitz" of costumes, cosmetics, and coiffures.

marks, their lack or abundance of pubic hair. Perhaps they are self-conscious of their breasts. They wonder, "Am I the wrong shape or size?" They fear involvement in some sort of contest. Going out among others who are nude lessens that fear.

The myths are just that — myths. Today's modern nude recreation opportunities offer you peace, harmony, and tranquillity. These qualities are not found in our work-a-day lives. With no need for fashion statements and no pressure to meet a pre-determined body mold, women can express individuality. We are free to be ourselves, to relax with our family and friends. Those who desire more strenuous recreation will find facilities for a full range of healthy activities such as swimming, hiking, volleyball, and other forms of exercise. Nudist resorts are safe and secure. Anyone behaving in an offensive manner is asked to leave. Most large resorts offer a full range of activities and social events. It is common to find someone who shares your particular interests.

Allow me to introduce you to two friends of mine, Crystal and Sandy. Take a glimpse, through their eyes, of what the future could hold for you.

Two Real-Life Examples

Crystal
Crystal's wardrobe spans the hues of the rainbow. Her fashion follows her moods. One day, she imitates the butterfly with a gala splash of colors and butterfly earrings. Another day, she'll be off to play with children she is baby-sitting, complete with floppy sun bonnet and long spiral earrings chosen especially to bring a sparkle to the young faces. Her bouncy walk

me.

When I asked her what interested her in the clothes-free lifestyle, Crystal told me, "I'm not interested in social nudity. I'm drawn to it. What draws me is the freedom. It's only when we get rid of our cover-ups that we have even a chance to live in peace."

Now Crystal has made friends within the nudist community and looks forward to each opportunity to join in our activities. Nude and animated among friends, her colorful personality shines even more brightly with her new-found freedom.

Sandy

Strikingly beautiful with intense dark eyes, platinum blond hair, and great curves, Sandy gestures expansively. She giggles. As she talks, a whimsical smile plays merrily across her face.

Sandy quickly lets me know she doesn't have the perfect body. "Too fat," she says, with a whisper of a sigh, breaking into a large grin, "but it doesn't matter. That's what I like about nude recreation. We're all equal. We all look alike. No one person is any better than another."

"I look for the sun to shine now that I'm a nudist," Sandy says. "In fact, I can hardly wait for it. I plan my weekends around whether the sun is shining or not."

Outdoors (soaking in the sun, playing shuffleboard, walking through the forest), or indoors (sharing a hot tub, eating a communal meal, conversing by the fireside), time spent in nude recreation is quality time.

You'll find everything you are looking for in nude recreation — relaxation, camaraderie and socialization; a legal, safe and secure environment; a family atmosphere where you can

go alone, with friends, with a partner, or with your children.

How Do I Start?

So, you've decided you may want to explore the accepting world of nude recreation and want to know how to begin. How does a woman overcome her self-consciousness to relax in a nudist environment? You just decide to do it.

You might want to go braless at first. Wear baggy clothes or a vest when you do. Become aware of the comfort or discomfort of having no constriction across your chest. Weigh for yourself whether you'd like to try this "new look" in public.

Try taking off your clothes at home on a day when you will be alone. Then do what you would normally do with clothes on. You may want to stay away from mirrors, so you don't spend time criticizing your body. See if after an hour or two you don't feel more relaxed.

Or, go skinny dipping. Feel the water on your nude body. You'll never want to wear a suit again! Or, sit nude in a hot tub with several friends. Notice how quickly the time goes and how the worries flee as well.

Call the American Association for Nude Recreation at 1-800-TRY-NUDE for suggestions. Ask them for their brochure "From a Woman's Perspective." Get a few addresses and phone numbers of resorts or travel clubs in your area. Talk to the owners or resort managers. Plan to meet some of the members clothed, at a restaurant or at a resort. You'll find that in addition to all the other benefits of nude recreation, it is also quite affordable!

Find the closest nudist resort. When you go, take along a large towel and a large, loose-fitting shirt to cover up if you like. When you are ready, undress at your leisure. Observe, relax, and ask questions. And don't forget the sun screen. You're going to need it!

Whether you look like Crystal or more like Sandy, nudists are accepting of all body shapes and sizes. Soon you'll be telling me, "Patti, why did it take me so long? How could I have wasted so many years?"

For further information:

American Association for Nude Recreation, 1703 N. Main St., Kissimmee, FL 34755-3396, 1-800-879-6833

The Naturist Society, PO Box 132, Oshkosh, WI 54902, 1-800-558-8250

World Guide to Nude Beaches and Recreation by Lee Baxandall

As Nature Intended by Adam Clapham and Robin Constable

Nude Recreation Survey by Gallup Organization

Therapy, Nudity & Joy by Aileen Goodson

Nudist Society by William Hartman, Marilyn Fithian, and Donald Johnson

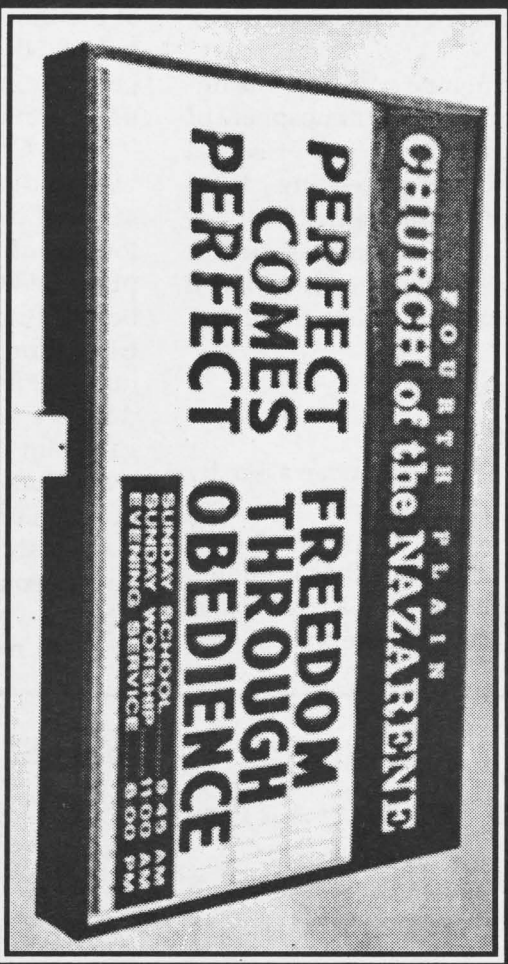
Growing Up Without Shame by Dennis Craig Smith with Dr. William Sparks.

The Readers Digest, "What 100,000 Women Told Ann Landers"

Video: *Body Positive* by the Naturist Society ♦

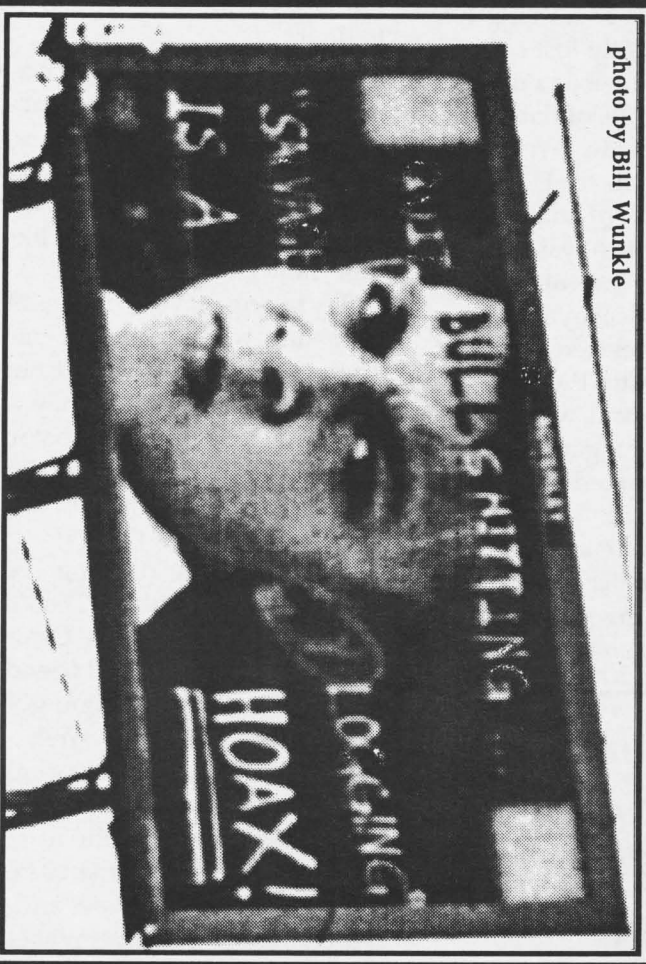
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